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ABSTRACT

An exploratory study examined the job and life satisfaction of a sample of 32 female entrepreneurs residing in the tri-state area of Maryland, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. To compare the entrepreneurs' concepts of life and job satisfaction to those of women in more traditional occupations, researchers also studied a sample of 32 female nursing supervisors from three hospitals in New Jersey and Maryland. The researchers administered the work, people, and pay scales of the Job Description Index (JDI) to both groups. While the entrepreneurs scored higher than the nursing supervisors on the work and people scales of the JDI, they scored lower on the pay scale. In addition, the entrepreneurs scored higher than the nursing supervisors on the global measures of job and life satisfaction, although the mean differences on these items were not significant. Based on their findings, researchers called for additional research to arrive at more definitive statements concerning the nature of relationships between job satisfaction and life satisfaction among entrepreneurs. More specifically, they suggested that future research efforts use a larger sample of female entrepreneurs, employ a measure to screen for success, and utilize a longitudinal approach. (MN)

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AN EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS OF JOB AND LIFE SATISFACTION AMONG ENTREPRENEURS

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AN EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS OF JOB AND LIFE SATISFACTION AMONG ENTREPRENEURS

There has been very little inquiry into the satisfactions that entrepreneurs derive from creating a business. (Although entrepreneur is sometimes used to refer to someone who operates a small business, it is used here in the strict sense of an individual who starts a business where none existed before.) Practically no research has been completed regarding the satisfaction the entrepreneur derives from working in the business created, nor has much research been reported on the life satisfaction of the entrepreneur. Until recently there was practically no research completed using samples of female entrepreneurs. (See, however, DeCarlo and Lyons 1978, Demarest 1977, Schrier 1975, Schwartz 1976.) Virtually none of the research that does exist on female entrepreneurs reports on job satisfaction or life satisfaction.

Why should entrepreneurial satisfaction be of any special interest? Is there a relationship between satisfaction and success? Presently available research findings are not helpful in answering this question. While much effort has gone into trying to identify predictors of entrepreneurial potential and to isolate causes of entrepreneurial failure, no research has been directed toward the identification of a link between satisfaction and success. And, yet, it may be that identification of the intensity and the components of satisfaction over the life cycle of a business would reveal a pattern that would lead to a better understanding of the entrepreneurial personality and entrepreneurial persistence.

BACKGROUND

Although research concerning the job satisfaction of entrepreneurs has taken place in a few studies, the concept of job satisfaction has

been approached by indirect means in most of these studies. In the thorough study of an all-male sample of Michigan entrepreneurs, Collins, Moore, and Unwalla (1964) found that satisfaction with job was not likely among the entrepreneurs. Although no statistical measures were made of the job satisfaction of the entrepreneurs, evaluation of Thematic Apperception Tests (TAT) indicated that the entrepreneurs did not exhibit much satisfaction with the job. The entrepreneurs presented a picture of restless, searching individuals who derived satisfaction from the creation and establishment of a new enterprise. The creative, survival-oriented types of activities provided a measure of satisfaction, rather than the activities usually associated with organization maintenance.

In a study of 14 male entrepreneurs, Ehrenberg (1970, p. 61) found that a majority, 8, of the entrepreneurs were dissatisfied with current attainments. Even though the entrepreneurs were successful by their own admission, in terms of such indicators of success as business volume, enterprise longevity, and growth of business, they were not satisfied with current attainments. Of the six entrepreneurs who reported that they had some satisfaction with current attainments, three reported that they were only partially satisfied and, further, they reported that they were only moderately successful.

In another investigation, Bamundo and Kopelman (1979) examined the effects of self-employment vs. non-self-employment on the job satisfaction-life satisfaction relationship. Under the assumption that being in business for one's self would tend to heighten job involvement, it was hypothesized that for self-employed individuals the correlation for job satisfaction and life satisfaction would be stronger than for those individuals who were not self-employed. The correlation of job/life satisfaction for the self-employed was .46; while for the non-self-

employed the job/life satisfaction correlation was .34. The difference in the correlations was significant. Self-employed persons, however, are not precisely the same as entrepreneurs as defined herein, although it is likely that the sample of self-employed persons contained a number of individuals who would be defined as entrepreneurs.

In a study by DeCarlo and Lyons, interviews with a sample of 32 female entrepreneurs indicated that the entrepreneurs were willing to acknowledge success in terms of longevity of the business endeavor, gross receipts, and the like, and at the same time, indicated that satisfaction as a personal evaluation of self was not necessarily positive. Success in that investigation as well as in those investigations of Collins et al, and Ehrenberg was defined in terms of one or more indicator variables such as longevity of the enterprise, number of employees, and gross receipts.

As in the discussion of Bamundo and Kopelman, one might reasonably assume that job involvement of entrepreneurs would give rise to relatively high levels of job satisfaction and life satisfaction. Of course, other assumptions could be stated; e.g. entrepreneurial tasks require high job involvement, and entrepreneurial task performance generates high levels of job satisfaction. In large-scale research of entrepreneurs such as that of Collins, et al, which examined the careers of many individuals it becomes clear that in the typical entrepreneurial career there are many opportunities for assuming leadership and responsibility, great opportunities for achievement, and opportunities for recognition. One might assume that the motivator factors identified by Herzberg (1966) exist in the entrepreneurial environment, and in the process of creating, establishing, and maintaining a business it seems reasonable to assume that the entrepreneur would derive much satisfaction from engaging in the activities required to have a business venture succeed.

The creating of a business requires activities which may generate certain kinds of satisfaction. The maintenance of a business requires activities which may not provide the same kind of satisfaction as the creative, business start-up kinds of activities.

METHODOLOGY

This investigation was to serve as a pilot study to examine the concepts of job satisfaction and life satisfaction among a sample of female entrepreneurs. Female entrepreneurs were selected for this study because recent research (DeCarlo and Lyons; Demarest) has indicated that female entrepreneurs present personal value and needs profiles which are different from those of females in general to a greater extent than male entrepreneurs are similarly discriminated from males in general. Thirty-two female entrepreneurs agreed to participate in the study. They ranged in age from 26 to 53 years and had an average of 15.8 years of formal education. Because of the exploratory nature of this study, a criterion of success for the entrepreneurial activity was not applied in the screening of participants. The entrepreneur sample members resided in the tri-state area of Maryland, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. The age of the businesses represented ranged from one to eight years.

To compare measures of job satisfaction, a sample of thirty-two female nursing supervisors was drawn from three hospitals; two hospitals in New Jersey, and one hospital in Maryland. The nursing supervisors were matched with the entrepreneurs on both number of years of formal education and age. These supervisors were characterized as bureaucratic females as contrasted to entrepreneurial females as the supervisors are employed in an organization of three or more supervising levels, and their income is primarily in the form of wages or salary. It was believed that the nursing supervisor represented a work environment that was clearly different from that of the typical entrepreneur in terms of structure,

organization, required job activities, and demands on personal life. This position was also felt to represent a traditional career opportunity for women and a managerial position in which women have always been over-represented.

MEASURES

The Work, People, and Pay scales of the Job Description Index, JDI, (Smith, et al, 1969) were administered to the samples. The Supervision and Promotions scales were not used because they were not appropriate to self-employed status of the entrepreneurs. In addition, a global measure of general life satisfaction was administered: "In general, how satisfying do you find the way you're spending your life these days? Would you call it completely satisfying, pretty satisfying, or not very satisfying?" The Survey Research Center, Robinson and Sharer (1973), report test-retest reliabilities of .67 and .70, among others, and concluded that the test-retest stability of the measure was impressive. Further, a global measure of job satisfaction was administered. This measure was used in the Bamundo and Kopelman research and was taken from the Survey Research Center's "Quality of Employment survey". The following question was asked: "All in all, how satisfied would you say you are with your job? Would you say you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not too satisfied, or not at all satisfied?" Bamundo and Kopelman found the measure to correlate significantly with all five JDI facet satisfaction scores, the largest being with work satisfaction, ($r = .43$). They also found that the measure was negatively related to a measure of work alientation ($r = -.44$) as well as to Patchen's Stress scales B and C ($r = -.35$, and $r = -.33$, respectively).

HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were investigated:

1. Entrepreneurial females would demonstrate greater job satisfaction in general and on specific scales, than bureaucratic females.
2. The relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction would be greater for entrepreneurial females than bureaucratic females.

RESULTS

The female entrepreneurs scored higher than the nursing supervisors on the Work and People scales of the JDI and scored lower than the nursing supervisors on the Pay scale. The only mean difference which was found significant was that difference on the Work scale ($p < .01$). The female entrepreneurs also scored higher than the nursing supervisors on the global measures of job and life satisfaction. Mean differences on these items were not statistically significant.

The results of these comparisons did not offer much support for the first hypothesis, although the difference on the Work scale may be representative of the most meaningful difference that could exist concerning the measures employed. In all but one (pay) of the comparisons, the sample of entrepreneurs demonstrated a more positive direction of satisfaction. Interestingly, in a study comparing new entrepreneurs with two groups of managers, all males, Brockhaus found that the entrepreneurs were significantly less satisfied for all JDI subscales except Pay.

In Tables 1 and 2 are found the results of the correlations of the items and scales used in the investigation. Examination of these tables indicates that the job satisfaction item correlates highly with the Work scales of the JDI, although this correlation for the nursing supervisor

sample did not reach significance. The correlations of the job satisfaction item with the scales of People and Pay were low and most of them were negative. The item on life satisfaction correlated highly and positively with the Pay scale of the JDI for the entrepreneur sample and negatively for the supervisor sample. The item correlated positively with the Work scale; all other correlations with the item were not significant.

In examining the correlations among the three scales of the JDI for each sample, the only noticeable similarity appears in the correlations between the scales of Work and Pay, both being positive and significant. The relationship of the People and Work scales appears to be opposite for the samples with a negative relationship in the entrepreneur sample, and a positive relationship in the supervisor sample. The former relationsip is statistically significant. In developing the JDI (Smith, et al) with a sample of 952 individuals representing seven different organizations, the correlations among the three scales were all positive and the lowest coefficient (Pay/Work) was .46. The entrepreneur sample in the current investigation presents a departure from the JDI development data as the correlations between the scales of Work and People (-.49) and between the scales of People and Pay (-.39) are negative and significant.

The relationsip between life satisfaction and job satisfaction as represented by the responses to the global measures was different in the two samples. for the entrepreneurs, the two measures were negatively correlated; while in the supervisor sample the measures were positively and significantly correlated. Interestingly, the job satisfaction score for each sample correlates positively with the Work scale of the JDI. The second hypothesis is not supported by these findings. The data suggest that the relationship between life satisfaction and job satisfaction for female entrepreneurs is, indeed, weak.

DISCUSSION

Given the measures used in the investigation with the resultant failure of the global items and the three (Work, People, Pay) scales of the JDI, save one--Work, to discriminate between female entrepreneurs and nursing supervisors in terms of life or job satisfaction, the data suggest that the difference between these samples are slight, indeed.

For the entrepreneurs in the investigation, the relationship between satisfaction with life and job, in global terms, is a negative one, or at least tends to be negative. This finding is generally consistent with the research where some attempt was made to ascertain entrepreneur satisfaction with work performance and life in general. Typically, the entrepreneur is not satisfied with performance and usually expresses a need to want to do better.

The entrepreneurs and supervisors show a relatively high correlation between job satisfaction and Work while the samples show a dissimilar relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction. It may be that the Work scale is a better estimate of overall job satisfaction than the global measure. This relationship may be further evidenced by the significance of the difference between mean scale scores on the Work scale examined against the magnitude of the correlations of both samples on Work and job satisfaction.

In the Bamundo and Kopelman study a positive, significant relationship was found between job and life satisfaction with self-employed persons; however, self-employed as a category includes professionals such as accountants, attorneys, physicians, psychologists, and the like, as well as those non-professionals who start new businesses. The research of DeCarlo and Lyons, Demarest, and Ehrenberg pointed to the expression on the part of entrepreneurs that, while the business may be successful according to some quantitative criterion, a personal evaluation of one's

success may be negative. The present study supports these findings.

For the JDI scales the pattern of correlations among scale scores for entrepreneurs demonstrate a greater departure from the JDI development sample than does the supervisor sample. The entrepreneurs as a group would normally be expected to demonstrate a different pattern of satisfactions with the job than a general sample of organization employees as much of the research on entrepreneurs has shown that the values, aspirations, and needs of entrepreneurs are quite dissimilar from employees in large and/or complex organizations.

The high correlations between life satisfaction and Pay, and Work and Pay, may provide evidence that financial rewards are used as a key indicator of personal success for the entrepreneur. McClelland (1953) has pointed out that the entrepreneur characterized as having a high need for achievement needs such feedback on performance and effort to tell him or her how things are going. Financial rewards provide a useful measure of performance for high achievers. For the entrepreneur sample the correlation between life satisfaction and pay demonstrates a significant relationship. The supervisor sample demonstrates a negative relationship between life satisfaction and pay. Several possibilities exist here, among which are: (1) salaries are low; (2) the supervisors believe the pay differentials among levels of employees are slight. There is no evidence to support the contention that the entrepreneurs regard pay in a very different context than do the supervisors.

CONCLUSIONS

The data available here does not support either hypothesis. As an exploratory effort, the results point to the need for additional research to enable more definitive statements about the nature of the relationships between job satisfaction and life satisfaction among entrepreneurs. Such additional research would also be expected to identify the components of

job and life satisfaction among entrepreneurs.

Several specific areas for potentially fruitful research are suggested by the findings. A study utilizing a larger sample of female entrepreneurs and employing a measure to screen for success would be able to provide data on the intensity and components of satisfaction for successful female entrepreneurs. A replication of this study with a sample of male entrepreneurs, both in general and with a success criterion applied, would yield important comparative data. Finally, a longitudinal study of the variations in the intensity and components of satisfaction over the life cycle of a business would be of great value in assessing the relative impact of creative activities and maintenance activities. Such a study could be conducted on a single sample at several points in time or in a sample chosen to include businesses at several points in the life cycle.

Table 1

Correlation Coefficients - Entrepreneurs

	Life Satisfaction	Work	People	Pay
Job Satisfaction	-.21	.58*	-.26	-.11
Life satisfaction		.09	-.27	.71*
Work			-.49*	.50*
People				-.39*

N = 32

* = significant at .05

Table 2

Correlation Coefficients - Supervisors

	Life Satisfaction	Work	People	Pay
Job satisfaction	.58*	.31	.01	-.11
Life satisfaction		.35*	.12	-.30
Work			.33	.44*
People				-.09

N = 32

* = significant at .05

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